

## PERCEIVED ROLE PERFORMANCE AND UNWED ADOLESCENT FATHERS

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### Introduction

Teenage pregnancy has continued to be a highly significant social issue. Adolescents in this country are engaging in premarital intercourse at an earlier age than their predecessors. Their sexual behavior has created a higher rate of teenage pregnancies than past years. Much of the current research activity on teenage pregnancy has focused on pregnant females, teenage mothers, and their children. For some time a male's role in teenage pregnancy has been belittled and his role as a teenage father has been virtually ignored. Gradually, researchers, practitioners, and administrators have begun to realize that "adolescent pregnancy cannot be understood if it is viewed solely from the adolescent mothers' perspective. To understand the etiology of adolescent pregnancy, the individual responses of the male and female must be examined" (Redmond, 1985, p. 337). "There are no accurate statistics regarding the number of teenage fathers available because many mothers refuse to or cannot identify the father of their babies" (Barret and Robinson, 1982, p. 354). Also, the young man may have impregnated more than one sex partner. "It has been estimated that adolescent males account for 1.1 million unintentional teenage pregnancies" (Barret and Robinson, 1982, p. 354).

### Background of Problem

Much of the current and increased attention on adolescent unwed fathers has been associated with three different factors. First, the neglected but strategic importance of involving the males in any program to combat teenage pregnancy and its consequences has gained attention. Sometimes "it is forgotten that it takes two to create a human" (Haskins, 1984, p. 160). Furthermore, he stated that "consideration cannot be entertained without an assessment of the male role" (Haskins, 1984, p. 160).

Another factor has been the proliferation of court cases drawing attention to the unwed father. Of all the court decisions affecting the unwed father, the Stanley vs. Illinois decision of the United States Supreme Court was the most significant and farthest reaching of the court cases. It set a precedent. Prior to Stanley vs. Illinois, the single father had not been a necessary party to any proceeding hearing on the custody of the child (Leashore, 1979, p. 535). In the Stanley case, a man and woman had lived "off and on" together for eighteen years. They had three children. When the children's mother died, the children were declared wards of the state. They were placed in a foster home without a hearing to determine their father's fitness to be a parent. The Court ruled that the denial hearing on fitness to single fathers, accorded to all other parents whose custody of their children is challenged by the State, constituted a denial of equal protection under the law (Pannor and Evans, 1975, p. 286).

In case two, John Lewis was born to Karen Lewis on 31 July 1968. One week later the County Court terminated her parental rights and placed the child with prospective adoptive parents. John's natural father petitioned the Court for an order to vacate the court's order to terminate parental rights and grant him a hearing concerning his rights to care and to obtain custody and control of his son. Furthermore, John's father had never received notice of a hearing to terminate parental rights. The court granted him a hearing but refused to hear

evidence regarding his fitness as a parent for his child. In August 1969, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled John's father had no rights in regard to his son because he was an illegitimate father. The case was appealed to the United States Supreme Court. The Court ruled that the case must "be reconsidered in light of Stanley vs Illinois" (Pannor and Evans, 1975, p. 286). Consequently in adoptive cases, adoption workers usually make every effort to involve the single father so that the child will not be placed with an adoptive family at legal risk.

The third factor on adolescent unwed fathers has emerged from an unprecedented interest by social scientists and related disciplines in fatherhood. Recently, social scientists and clinicians have begun to assess the problems of adolescent pregnancy and the relationship between unwed adolescent fathers and their children. Increasingly, dogmas and conventional wisdom that have guided and defined those relationships have been scrutinized by professionals and lay persons. Rather than sit by the sidelines or serve as mother's helpers, men were being urged to participate in the lives of their children following delivery. They have been becoming involved during the pregnancy by accompanying their partner to the clinic and providing emotional support. "Apparently, increasing numbers of men have begun reaching out for more sustaining relationships with the children in their lives" (Fein, 1978, p. 122).

#### Purpose of Study

While researchers have begun to examine issues of unwed adolescent fathers, there is some but limited research on role performance of unwed fathers. This paper investigates how certain internal and external factors influence the unwed adolescent father's behavior. The investigation provides information on the relationship among his perceived role performance, and the adolescent's self-image, and role expectations, as well as the perceived expectations of his parents and partner.

In order to test these factors the following hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis 1: Perceived role performance is positively related to self-image. Hypothesis 2: Perceived role performance is positively related to perceived role expectations of his parents. Hypothesis 3: Perceived role performance is positively related to perceived role expectations of his partner. Hypothesis 4: Perceived role performance is positively related to father's own role expectations.

#### Definition of Key Terms and Variables

Unwed adolescent fathers are unmarried fathers under the age of 21. Partner refers to the mother of the adolescent father's children. Partner is preferred to girlfriend because their sexual relationship may have dissolved during the pregnancy or by the time of the child's birth. However, they are likely to interact because of the child.

The dependent variable selected for this study was perceived role performance. Perceived role performance is the parenting behavior of the adolescent father as he rates it. For this study, the parental behavior of unwed adolescent fathers was examined. The independent variables for this study were perceived role expectation of others, adolescent father's own role expectations and self-image. Perceived expectations are those role expectations about his parental ability that the adolescent father believes are sent to him from either his parents or partner. Adolescent father's own expectations are those role expectations about his parental

ability that he has internalized and accepted as belonging to him. Self-image was an important construct. It has been found to correlate with other important aspects of functioning, such as personality and physical development, interpersonal relationships, family relations, coping abilities, and mood. The self is the sum total of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Self-image is an aspect of psychological functioning.

To measure self-image, the Offer Self-Image Questionnaire (OSIQ) was used. Role performance, perceived expectations of others, and fathers' own expectations were measured by a questionnaire developed by this writer.

#### Literature Review

Fatherhood and motherhood have been complementary processes which have evolved within the culturally established family structure to safeguard the physical and emotional development of the child (Benedict, 1970, p. 167). Yet, research about men in general and fathers in particular has been scanty when compared to the available research on mothers. Furthermore, researchers and service providers historically have limited the amount of research they have done on the unwed father regardless of his age (Connolly, 1978; Leashore, 1979). The literature on adolescent parenting has minimized the role of the father and focused primarily on the mother (Barret and Robinson, 1982, p. 484).

#### Role Performance

The fact that unwed adolescent fathers have been active in their child's life is almost completely ignored. While some teenage fathers have accepted little if any responsibility for children conceived out-of-wedlock, many others have accepted their responsibilities and tried to fulfill them (Nye, 1980, p. 8). Many adolescent fathers interrupted their schooling to work in order to provide for their children. Lorenzi, Klerman, and Jekel (1977) interviewed 180 school age girls who registered to attend the Young Mothers' Clinic of the Yale-New Haven Hospital. To participate in the study, the girls had to be 17 years old or younger, unmarried, and residents of New Haven. The girls were followed for two years after they delivered. The researchers found that two thirds of the fathers were contributing something to the support of their partner and babies three months after the birth of the child.

In a five year study by Furstenberg in 1976, he found 63 percent of all fathers were maintaining contact with their children five years after the children were born. Of the 63 percent, 21 percent of the fathers were living with their children. Another fifth did not reside with the children, yet they saw them on a regular and consistent basis at least once a week. The remaining 21 percent maintained an episodic relationship with their children; these fathers visited on an irregular basis. These fathers did give economic support but the researcher did not give any information on the level of their support.

In another study, Panzarine and Elster (1983) interviewed a convenience sample of 20 adolescent unwed males who were 18 years of age or younger. Each subject was interviewed once during each trimester of the partner's pregnancy. Their average age was 17.6 years and they were primarily from middle socio-economic backgrounds. Of the 20, 18 males were white. They found that all the fathers viewed the provider role as a major component of fatherhood. Each was involved in some activity to improve the financial situation of his partner and baby. Those who were not working before the pregnancy found jobs. Some left

school and sought full time jobs. Those who did work sought either a better paying job or overtime. Eighteen of these boys were involved in an activity to help prepare for the baby's arrival. Some fathers bought baby clothes, supplies, and toys. Others prepared the physical environment by fixing up a room or a crib for the newborn. Fourteen fathers talked to other new fathers to elicit their feelings on what it was like to be a new father.

Since researchers have just begun to examine the unwed adolescent father little information is known about his parenting behavior. However, as researchers have begun to look at the unwed adolescent fathers their strengths and weaknesses have been exposed. While these fathers may have regular and consistent contact with their children, their unpreparedness for parenting was very likely to jeopardize the quality of care they were able to give them. de Lissovoy (1973) interviewed 48 couples over a three year period. The sample included 48 married couples. This study focused on married adolescent fathers. Nevertheless, his data were consistent with the observations of unwed adolescent father's parenting ability other researchers have made. The girls' average ages were 16 1/2 and the boys' average ages were 17. Forty-six couples were expecting a child at the time of their marriage. The families of these couples tended to belong to a rural working class. Each couple were interviewed in their home five times. On the second interview, the couple were asked to rate themselves on a marital adjustment scale. The second interview occurred six to nine months after the first interview. The parents were tested on their knowledge of child development. When the couple's child was between 18 and 30 months old, the mother was given a childrearing practice schedule. The schedule measured the mother's acceptance and control of her children. The last visit occurred at the end of a three year period.

Generally, these fathers were not familiar with the developmental norms for children and infants. Moreover, their general lack of knowledge and experience with children, their unrealistic expectations of a child's developmental norms, their general disappointment in their own lives, and their lack of economic resources served to raise their instability and lower their threshold of tolerance (de Lissovoy, 1973, p. 23). Moreover, the immaturity of the parents, coupled with the fact that they may have been thrust into parenthood before having adequately adjusted to their marriage increased the likelihood of marital instability. Marital instability and hostility increased the probability of infant maladjustment.

In short, the circumstances surrounding teenage fatherhood, such as immaturity, and unpreparedness for parenthood may combine to make many of these men inadequate sources of emotional and financial support which in turn may have adverse effects on the children's development (Elster and Lamb, 1982, p. 154). An adolescent father's inability to provide adequate childcare may be explained by social and developmental immaturity. Adolescence is a time when teenagers are very egocentric and they use this time to take on various roles to see how they feel. In their continuing effort to develop the sort of self with which they can live most comfortably, adolescents try out various roles (Rogers, 1978, p. 22).

Adolescents anticipate feedback from others about how they regard them in their various roles; that is, they depend on and expect from others feedback concerning their success in playing various roles. They take turns rehearsing in fantasy how they will play a particular role and trying it out among their peers and others to determine their reactions. As they receive compliments on the one hand or negative feedback on the other, they continuously reshape their efforts and images (Rogers, 1978, p. 24).

The adolescent period is a psychological moratorium or an "as if period" during which the individual can try on different roles "as if" he were committed to these roles; however, since it is an "as if period," he is not really committed and is not held fully accountable (Erikson, 1963, p. 262). During this period the adolescent can try out different political ideologies, try out different religions, experiment in different vocations, and may experiment with various kinds of relationships. As suggested earlier, it is during and a result of the trying of various roles that the adolescent finds himself, develops an identity, and emerges with commitments to politics, religion, vocational career, and a perspective on the opposite sex (Muss, 1975, p. 77). During this phase the adolescent is very preoccupied with himself and unlikely to be highly sensitive to the physical and emotional needs of his partner and child. Though sexually matured, the individual may be more or less retarded in his psychosocial capacity for intimacy and in the psychosocial readiness of parenthood. (Erikson, 1968, p. 110). Erikson (1963, p. 262) theorized adolescent love to a considerable extent is an attempt to arrive at a definition of one's identity by projecting one's diffused ego image on another and seeing it reflected.

The adolescent process initiates a phase of increased narcissism (Blos, 1979, p. 262). In sum, this increased narcissism allows the adolescent to experiment with various roles and simultaneously prevents his capacity for intimacy and parenthood.

Expectant fatherhood is a stressful situation (Caughlan, 1960, p. 30). Caughlan (1960) identified five sources of stress for adult fathers. The first source of stress is the father's concern about his financial ability to meet the needs of his child. The second source is the father's anxiety about fulfilling his paternal role. The third source of stress is the enviable baby. His demands include attention, dependency, unrestrained impulsiveness, and such libidinal pleasures as nursing, and being cuddled. The fourth source of stress is the pregnancy itself. Pregnancy arouses pregenital conflicts; among them envy of feminine reproduction power (Caughlan, 1960, p. 32). Finally, unwed fathers may experience a higher degree of stress than married fathers (Caughlan, 1960, p. 31). The illegitimacy is a conspicuous source of stress. There may be blame and shame producing stress (Elster and Panzarine, 1981, p. 47).

The combination of the stress of adolescent fatherhood and a strained psychosocial functioning distinguish adolescent fathers from adult fathers and place them at high risk for parenting failure (Elster and Lamb, 1982, p. 150). Adolescent fathers are likely to be more emotionally vulnerable to the stresses surrounding pregnancy than adult fathers (Elster and Lamb, 1982, p. 150). When role transition occurs out of synchrony with expected social standards the risks of turmoil increases. Adolescent fathers must cope with the additional stress which is associated with normal adolescent psychological development. The psychological immaturity of some adolescent fathers, therefore, not only contributed to the stress which they experienced but also influenced their capability to manage that stress. (Elster and Lamb, 1982, p. 150).

In another study by Elster and Panzarine (1981), they interviewed 20 teenage fathers. The subjects of this study tended to be predominantly Black and came from low socio-economic families. Their mean age was 17.6. They examined the amount and source of stress these young men experienced as a result of the pregnancy and fatherhood. The stressors reported by these fathers fell into four major groupings. The first group consisted of vocational and educational concerns. The subjects worried about how they were going to support financially

their new family. They were concerned about maintaining or getting a job and quitting or a continuing school. Second, they were concerned about the health of the mother, the health and future welfare of the child and what would happen during labor and delivery. Concerns about how they would perform as parents, including issues of discipline and child care comprised group three. Finally, they worried about the impact of being a father on their interpersonal relationships, with their partner, friends, and parents.

In conclusion, all adolescents experience a phase of rapid psychological development, a major component of which is to develop a mature self identity. Not until this occurs does an adolescent have the self-esteem to deal with the considerable stress such as generated by the unplanned pregnancy of partner (Elster and Panzarine, 1981, p. 47). An adolescent father's parenting ability becomes crucial because its impact on his partner and his children. Recently, researchers have begun to examine the impact of adolescent fathers on their children and their children's mother. A service orientation of agencies to fathers have the indirect effect of increasing the self assurance and competence of the mother (Elster and Lamb, 1982). One of the most common ways in which adolescent fathers influence the mother is through their financial support. While the necessities made available by financial support affect the baby, it increase also the mother's feelings of economic security and in turn her interaction with the child. Emotional support from the father, is also particularly important especially in light of the high degree of social prejudice extended to the mother. If the relationship between the adolescent mother and her parents becomes stressed as a result of the pregnancy, the support of the child's father becomes very important in reducing this stress. In turn such a reduction in maternal emotional stress might lead to an increase in her subsequent involvement with her infant.

Consensus in child rearing attitudes is related to maternal involvement and competence (Parke, Power, and Fisher, 1980, p. 98). The unmarried mother's feelings of self worth are enhanced through the involvement of the father (Leashore, 1979, p. 523).

Interested in a range of matters, Furstenberg (1976) interviewed 404 teenage mothers. The mothers in this study resided in Baltimore. They were mainly Black (91%) and from families of lower and blue collar classes. The average age at the time of delivery was 16.2 years. They were interviewed one, three, and five years after delivery. The interviews focused on occupational, marital and career plans; impact of the pregnancy; sexual patterns; birth control knowledge and experience; attitudes toward medical care; and information on family relations.

Furstenberg noticed a slight association between paternal participation and the number of behavioral problems the mother reported of her child. Behavioral problems included behaviors such as frequent fighting with peers, taking things that did not belong to the child, and frequent temper tantrums. Less than one-third of the children living in unbroken families experienced two or more chronic problems. A similar proportion of children with two or more chronic problems was found in families with which the father assumed a supportive role. In father-absent families, 43 per cent of the children had two or more problems in families which the father had only occasional contact with his child.

Furstenberg also found the continuity of the relationship between the child and the father to be a critical factor in the child's cognitive performance. The absence of the father from the home had a detrimental effect on the child's performance on the Preschool Inventory

(PSI). PSI is a brief assessment procedure designed for individual use with children in the age range of three to six years. Furstenberg used a shorter form of the original inventory: it contained 64 items measuring the child's basic knowledge about numbers, concepts, vocabulary and elementary visual and motor skills. Furthermore, regardless of economic status, the father's absence had a detrimental effect on the PSI score of the child. Children whose parents married early and remained through the study performed at a higher level than children in other family situations.

Furstenberg observed the children did better in cognitive and social skills when the parental couple married and stayed married. Children who saw their fathers regularly did not score differently from those who had episodic or no relations with their fathers. Several factors could account for these findings. Possibly, in the father absent families, there were other males. For example, a grandfather or uncle, could have an effect on the youngster. Furstenberg's instrument could not have been sensitive enough to assess the differences in social development among these children. Thirdly, possibly it was too early in the children's lives to pick up on the dormant impact of the father's absence on his child's social development. As with cognitive development, when couples were married the father was more accessible to their children. Also, possibly the maternal child interaction is enhanced by the father when the parents are married.

#### Psychosocial Factors

In examining psychosocial issues several researchers have considered the psychosocial factors that distinguish adolescent fathers from non-fathers (Hendricks, 1983; and Pauker, 1971) and the psychosocial effects of adolescent fatherhood (Pannor, 1971; and Card and Wise, 1978). The researchers who compared adolescent fathers to non-adolescent fathers have mixed results. Hendricks (1983) interviewed 38 unmarried adolescent fathers and 35 adolescents who were not fathers. Their average age at the time they became fathers was 18.2 years and they were Black. They were selected by the social services staff at a prenatal clinic. The two groups were matched for age and residential location. He found the differences between fathers and their controls minimal and were only frequently significant; however, the findings suggested that unmarried Black adolescent fathers were more likely than their controls to be more trusting, to drop out of school, to be employed, and not to be church goers. These results supported the conclusion that the differences that existed between fathers and non-fathers tended to be social and demographic and not psychological.

Pauker (1971) examined the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) scores of 84 adolescent fathers. Their average age was 14.7 and the age ranged from 13 to 17. The boys had taken the MMPI before they became fathers and while they were in the ninth grade in the Minnesota school system. The school districts in Minneapolis and St. Paul were excluded. They were matched for age and socio-economic status with boys who were not fathers.

Pauker found the differences between the two groups were not large and were only occasionally significant statistically. The fathers tended to be more active and somewhat less controlled. It would be difficult to draw any conclusions about the fathers' sexual activities from being diagnosed as more active and less controlled than the comparison group. While a considerable number of the fathers came from broken homes, it was not sufficient to make a statistical contributing factor. It accounted for only seven percent of the out of wedlock

father group. Thus, Pauker concluded boys will be boys, and some of them will be unwed adolescent fathers.

Johnson and Staples (1979) conducted a study to develop an approach to the promotion of sexual responsibility and the reduction of the repetition of unwanted, out-of-wedlock pregnancy through goal-directed support and assistance for unwed adolescent fathers and potential unwed adolescent fathers. They interviewed 118 adolescent fathers and non-fathers. The sample included Blacks, Chicanos, and Asians from Los Angeles. The researchers suggested that minority males used sexual relations with women and the subsequent birth of children to boost their self-esteem and enhance their self-image of themselves as men. Johnson and Staples contended that minority males do not have access to conventional expressions of masculinity, for example, employment and apprentice programs, and will often express it through sexual activity, the results of which may be a child they cannot support. The researchers, however, are hard pressed to distinguish clearly between those adolescents that become fathers and those who do not by more objective findings, such as school performance, father absent homes, or socio-economic status. It probably is safe to suggest that, from the unmarried adolescent's point of view, most instances of procreation are unintended and result accidentally from successful bargaining (Earls and Siegel, 1980, p. 474). As one unwed adolescent father ruefully said to this writer, "It was not meant to be."

Locus of control is another psychosocial variable that has been examined by researchers. The results of these studies were mixed. Hendricks and Fullilove (1981) interviewed 48 unmarried adolescent fathers and 50 adolescent males who were reported not to have fathered out of wedlock children. The subjects were selected by the social service workers from the Bethune Center for unwed fathers in Columbus, Ohio. The respondents were selected in a non random manner. Of the selected demographic traits fathers were only statistically different in two areas. They tended not to go to school and tended to be employed. Further, their average age at the time of their child's birth was 16.6 years. The participants in the study were Black. Based on these researchers' findings, unmarried Black adolescent fathers were more likely to have an external locus of control. Adolescent males with a external locus of control were less likely to practice birth control. Furthermore, they tended to believe that the use of birth control methods would not necessarily help to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Robinson and Barret (1983) examined the role of the locus of control in a group of adolescent fathers. They interviewed 20 unwed adolescent fathers identified by several social agencies in a southeastern city. Their mean age was 17.5 years. The teenage fathers were matched for age, however, the matched group differed in that they came from middle income, professional or blue collar intact families. On the basis of the data they collected, adolescent fathers saw themselves as much in control of their destiny as adolescent males who had not fathered children.

The contradicting data between Hendricks and Fullilove and Robinson and Barret suggest more research is needed in this area perhaps with large and random samples. At least some of the differences between the two studies may be accounted for by the measuring instruments. Hendricks and Fullilove's questionnaire contained two questions to measure the locus of control. Robinson and Barret used the Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale.

The psychosocial consequences of under employment, interrupted education, and loss of



earnings are well documented by the literature. Card and Wise (1978) collected data from a large national stratified sample of adolescents in high school. In 1960 a national random sample of 3,750 students from 1,225 senior and junior high schools were drawn. They were interviewed in high school, and again one, five, and eleven years after the expected date of graduation. Adolescent parents did not complete as many years of schooling as their classmates. In terms of occupation differences, early parenthood leads to early entrance into the labor force. Eleven years after high school graduation, adolescent child bearers were statistically significantly over-represented in the blue collar job category and under represented in the professions suggesting their divergent educational attainment. Adolescent fathers tended to be married at an earlier age than their peers and they tended to have a higher incidence of separation and divorce than their peers.

The ability of the father to handle the stress of fatherhood is related to among other things, psychosocial adjustment. Elster and Lamb (1982) measured the self-image of 16 unwed teenage prospective fathers. These young men were given the Offer Self-Image Questionnaire. The results indicated that on the measure of psychosocial adjustment, these prospective fathers tended to score lower on scales of adjustment than standardized groups of normal males, delinquent males, and mentally disturbed males. Without supportive services, these young men would be unable to provide adequate support for their partner or adequate parenting for their children. Even though they wanted to be adequate parents, their cognitive and psychosocial developmental maturity may have made them incapable to provide the qualitative parenting necessary for early psychological development.

#### Influence of Parents and Partners

There is a paucity of information available on the impact of an adolescent father's parent or partner on his behavior. Parental involvement helps adolescent fathers provide adequate parenting to their children. Communication between a boy and his parents must be established so that the adolescent father can assume his role and properly carry out his responsibilities. In doing this, they must clarify to the unwed father what they can or cannot do to help (Pannor, 1971, p. 469). Parents are very influential in their teenage children's life. Researchers have examined adolescents' attachment to their parents. Won, Yamamura, and Ikeda (1969) interviewed 309 randomly selected students in Hawaii during 1964-1965. The students were selected from senior high schools in Honolulu. The researchers asked the students to respond to a list of problems adolescents face and to identify who they sought for counsel with the problem either their parents or peers. In the identified problem areas of concern to the adolescent, the evidence indicated a significantly greater reliance of youth on their parents for counsel and guidance than on their peer group members (Won, et al. 1969, p. 47). Greenberg, Siegel, and Leitch (1983) also examined the nature and quality of adolescent's attachment to peers and parents. They interviewed 213 adolescents ranging from 12 to 19 years of age. They found a higher quality of attachment of adolescents to parents than to their peers.

In attachment to parents, adolescent fathers are very much like their non-father peers. Hendricks, Howard, and Caesar (1981) interviewed 95 unwed fathers from Tulsa, Chicago, and Columbus. When they were asked by the researchers who they would go to first with a problem, the majority was likely to seek a family member. Their first person of choice was their mother followed by their father. In a previously discussed study, Panzarine and Elster (1983) interviewed 20 fathers under the age of 18 years. All the subjects were either 17 or

18 years old: two were Hispanic and the rest were White. Eleven subjects were Mormons. Their most popular source of information were their partner and their parents.

In addition to parents being a source of information for adolescent fathers they also transmitted their values to their sons. Robbins and Lynn (1973) interviewed 44 boys: 22 were unmarried fathers and the remaining 22 were not fathers. The fathers' average age was 17 years and 11 months. The two groups were matched for ethnic identification and age. The boys were wards of the California Youth Authority. They examined recidivism and attitudes among unwed teenage fathers. Their findings supported the hypothesis of generation recidivism in illegitimacy between unwed parents and children of both sexes. This study found differences in attitudes between unwed fathers and non-fathers may be transmitted to their children in either direct or indirect ways, surely contribute to generation recidivism in illegitimacy. The parents approved of their own children becoming unwed parents, approved of extra marital sex, disapproved of contraception, and approved of marrying a woman with an illegitimate child by another man: they naively assumed that their children would not be affected by their behavior.

The influence of the adolescent father's partner on his behavior has not been documented fully. The literature suggested that in many of the cases the bond was strong between the adolescent father and his partner (Hendricks, 1982; Pannor, 1971). It is easy to speculate that she must have had some influence over his behavior but the literature failed to document it.

#### Methodology

##### Study Population

This study relies on a non-probability sample of 43 unwed adolescent fathers. The fathers were recruited primarily from the Arthur Capper Health Center. The health center is comprehensive and it offers a wide range of medical and supportive services. The services include general medicine, podiatry, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, adolescent medicine, cardiac clinic, dermatology clinic, nutrition, dental clinic, Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC), and social services. The clinic is under the auspices of the Washington, D.C. Department of Human Services. The clinic is located in a socially and economically diverse neighborhood. However, the clinic's population does not reflect the neighborhood's diversity. The clinic's population primarily include families from low income paying employment or public assistance. While the predominance of clients reside in the area, many clients come from other neighborhoods in the city. The clinic has no geographic boundaries. However, the lack of geographic boundaries does not alter the type of clients seen in the clinic. Subjects for the study were drawn from three clinics services: pediatrics, adolescent medicine, and social services. When patients initially visit either the adolescent clinic or the pediatrics clinic, routinely they are referred to social services. It was through social services that adolescent fathers were recruited for this study. Social services staff briefly told the adolescent mothers about the study and asked them for permission to contact their child's father. In the cases where the father had accompanied his child to the clinic, the social service staff explained the study to him in detail. If he agreed to participate in the study the social service staff gave him the consent form to read and sign: then the interview was conducted by this researcher.

In addition to subjects from Arthur Capper Health Center, subjects were selected from Center for Youth Services (CYS) and Operating Services Assisting Youth (OSAY). CYS was formed to help youngsters 12-24 years old develop their interests and talents and to assist them with any problems they may have. They provide education, employment, counseling, recreational and medical services. OSAY provides educational, employment, health and nutrition and legal services to youth, 9-21 years old. Services are also extended to their families. The chief purpose of OSAY is to help young people with adjustment problems and to provide them with a better understanding of themselves, their potential and their future.

Most of the interviews occurred in the office or in one of the centers. Three young fathers were interviewed in their home for the convenience of the father. For the subjects attending these clinics, they were contacted by the social worker of the clinic. The client was told by the social worker the nature and purpose of the study. If the client agreed to participate, he was interviewed either in his home or at the center where he received social services. The interviews were conducted by this researcher. When the researcher met the subject he was given a consent form to read and sign if he was 18 or older. Researcher told client he could withdraw at any time during the interview. For participants under 18 the consent form was given to the parent of the teenage father. The questionnaire was administered orally. The interview lasted 30 minutes. The researcher interviewed adolescent fathers from July 1986 to July 1987. Each father was interviewed once.

#### Study Instruments

The study questionnaire included a face sheet, a self-image scale (OSIQ), and several scales developed by this researcher to assess perceived role performance, perceived role expectations of partner and parents, and the father's own expectations.

The OSIQ was designed by Offer and his colleagues (Offer, Ostrov, and Howard, 1981). The items on this scale were based on theories of adolescent self-image as well as substantial developmental research (Offer, Ostrov, and Howard, 1981, p.1). The OSIQ cluster into 11 separate scales each representing a dimension of the self.

On the OSIQ, it is possible to obtain a separate score for each of the 11 scales. For example, a score on the vocational-educational scale provides information on his development in that area. In addition to obtaining a score on the scales, it is possible to measure an aspect of self. The social self is comprised of the vocational-educational, morals, and social relationship scales. A combination of the scores on these scales will measure the social self. Finally, by adding all the scores of the 11 content areas or the five aspects of the self the researcher will obtain a score to indicate his self-image. It is possible for an individual to get a low score on one of the aspects of the self and score high on the other four aspects of the self. The grand total score which is used in this study is an indication of the adolescent father's level of psychosocial functioning.

#### Results

The sample included 43 Black urban unwed adolescent fathers. The all Black sample was not by design but rather a function of the type of clients who came to the agencies for services. The age ranged from 15 to 21 years of age. The mean age of the last grade completed was 10.349. The level of significance used for this study was .05. Perceived role

performance was found to be positively related to self-image,  $r(42) = .30, p < .05$ . Perceived role performance was not found to relate to the perceived role expectations of his parents,  $r(42) = .09, p > .05$ . Perceived role performance did not correlate with role expectations of the adolescent father's partner,  $r(42) = -.05, p > .05$ . Perceived role performance was related to the father's own role expectations,  $r(42) = .30, p < .05$ .

### Discussion

Role theory states role performance is influenced by role expectations, role conceptions, and personality attributes. For this study, role performance is related to how much the adolescent father took responsibility for his child's care. An adolescent father's own expectations, that is role conceptions, are related to his own set of expectations for paternal care. Personality attribute for this study was the self-image of the adolescent. Self-image indicated the adolescent father's level of psychosocial functioning. These variables influenced the parental role behavior of adolescent fathers. This study sought to identify and to determine those variables that influenced the adolescent father's ability to take responsibility for his child's care. The findings of the study supported the proposition that the adolescent's ability to take responsibility for his child's care was influenced by his self-image and his own expectations rather than the expectations of his partner or parents. In reference to role theory the data of this study suggests that self-image and father's own expectations for fatherhood were a greater influence than either the perceived expectations of parents or partner on his parental role performance. This study also added information to the construct self-image. The research literature suggested that a father's ability to parent adequately his child is related to his level of psychosocial development. This study added support to this tenet. As a father's self-image increased his sense of responsibility for parenting increased. He became willing to assume responsibility for his child's care.

This study added to the emerging data on unwed fathers. First, it identified those variables that produced good role performance with respect to parenting. Second, the data supported the contention that psychosocial development was crucial to parenting effectively and the higher it was the more effective a father's parenting behavior was. Researchers (de Lissovoy, 1973; Elster and Panzarine, 1981) reported that a teenage father's level of psychosocial development placed him at risk for parenting behavior. This researcher's data supported their findings. Thirdly, the data added support to the notion that a father's role performance with respect to his child decreased as his child gets older. Furstenberg (1976) and Lorenzi, et al. (1977) observed that adolescent fathers' level of financial support to their child and visitation to their child dropped as the child aged. The data in this study supported their findings.

### Contribution to Social Work

The focus of social work is intervention in the client's psychosocial malfunctioning: modification of the situational variables in the client's community, neighborhood, work situation, or family insofar as they affect his welfare; and helping the client himself alter his personal and interpersonal functioning (Strean, 1978, p. 39). In short, social work tries to increase the client's level of psychosocial functioning. Social work views psychosocial functioning as propelled by both inner and outer forces (Strean, 1978, p. 40). For social workers to intervene in the area of teenage pregnancy they must have some understanding of the internal and external factors that relate to it. This study sought to provide information, on the internal and external factors that relate to teenage pregnancy and adolescent parents, to

practitioners, administrators, and policymakers in social work. This study increased their knowledge base of adolescent fathers. The increased knowledge base can be used to develop, to implement, and to maintain services for adolescent fathers. This study identified areas where social work intervention is indicated. First, data pointed out that adolescent fathers become less involved with their children as the children age. The task for social workers is to develop and to implement programs to help fathers to continue their level of involvement in their children's lives. Secondly, self image and father's own expectations for paternal behavior were found to relate to father's role performance. For social workers to help adolescent fathers assume responsibility for their children, they will have to design strategies that will help them maintain a high level of self-image and help them to internalize reasonable and realistic expectations for themselves as fathers. In an effort to assist teenage fathers they must help the fathers take responsibility for their children. The teenage mothers and their children also benefit from the social worker's help to the adolescent fathers.

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